

Some thoughts on non-nominal appositional modifiers

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Background: Defining apposition

- Defining characteristics(?)
 - Suppressibility
 - Reversibility
 - Coreference
 - Apposition markers
 - Syntactic category of the anchor and the apposition

- Considerable debate over which to take into account

Category of the apposition

- Must be the same as the anchor (e.g. Burton-Roberts 1975, Heringa 2011)
- Both anchor and apposition must be NPs (e. g. Halitsky 1974, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, Lasersohn 1986)
- Apposition can be non-nominal (e. g. O'Connor 2008, Quirk et al. 1994)
 - PP: *This course, on English grammar, starts tomorrow.* (Quirk et al. 1994: 1287)
 - AP: *A man, timid and hesitant, approached the official.* (Quirk et al. 1994: 1295)

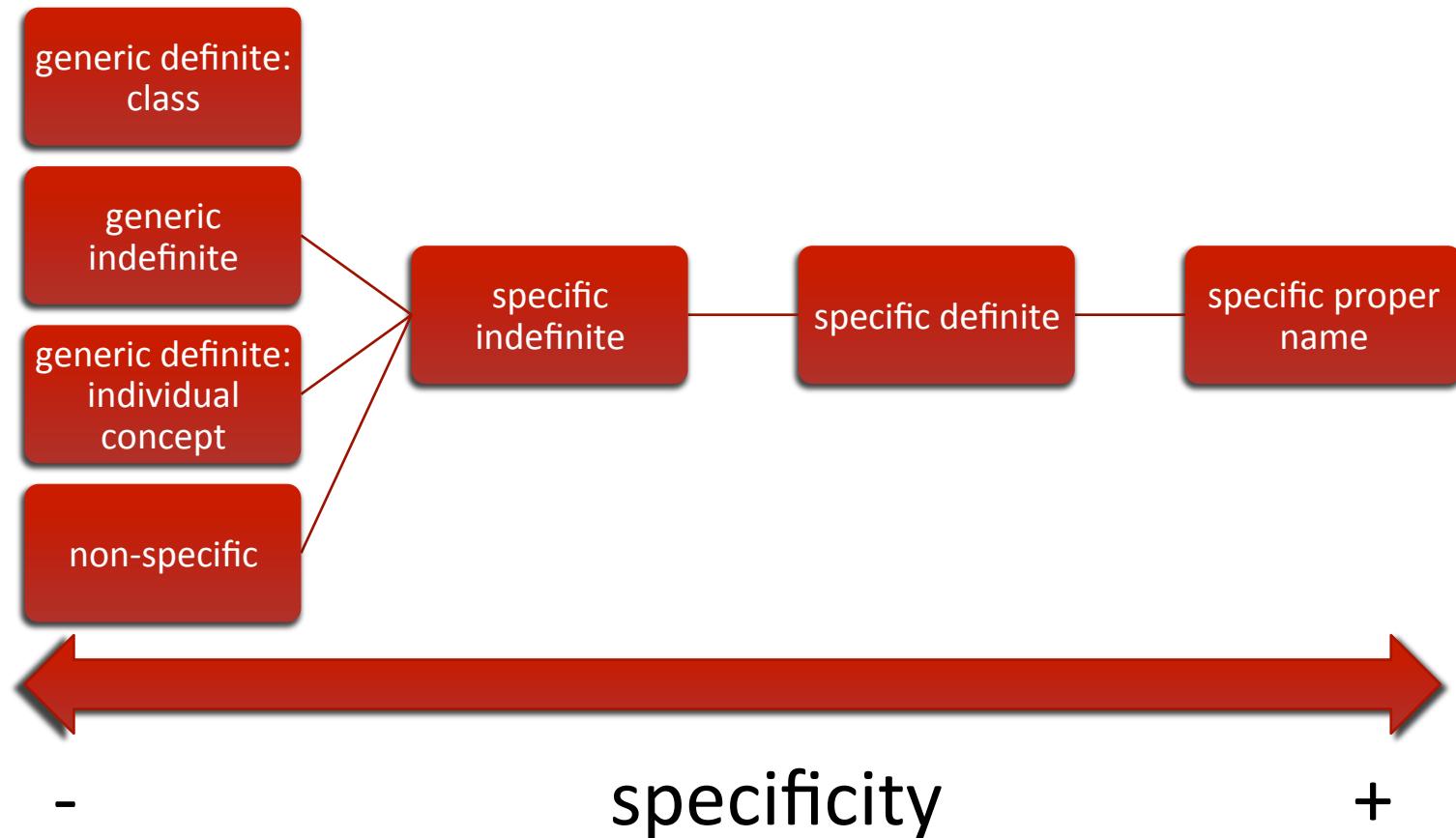
Objectives

- Investigate whether AP and PP appositions indeed form a homogeneous class
- Semantics: Heringa's (2011) work on antecedents and semantic classes
- Syntax: O'Connor's (2008) work on adverbs

Three classes of appositions (Heringa 2011)

- Identification: *The lion, the panthera leo, is threatened with extinction.* (p. 26)
- Attribution: Part-whole relationship between anchor and apposition
 - *Jan's pet, a baboon, shows its teeth when it is angry.*
- Inclusion: Whole-part relationship between anchor and apposition
 - Exemplification: *A zoo, such as the Apenhul, costs a lot of money*
 - Particularization: *An ape, but especially Jan's gorilla, likes bananas a lot.*

The specificity scale (Heringa 2011)



Identification

- Anchor and apposition = same on the specificity scale
 - Generic: *The lion, the panthera leo, is threatened with extinction (p. 26); definiteness respected*
 - Non-specific: *Jan would like to have *a little monkey*, such a nice inhabitant of the Apenhul, on his shoulder. (p. 27)*
 - Specific: *The youngest inhabitant of the Apenhul, this sweet little animal, jumped on Jan's shoulder (p. 27); definiteness not always respected*

Attribution

- Anchor: All positions on the scale
- Apposition: Generic indefinite or generic individual concept
- Examples (pp. 44-45)
 - Generic anchor: *The prism, a three-dimensional figure, is applied in optics.*
 - Specific anchor: *Piet's cone, a toy, is bright red.*
 - Non-specific anchor: *Jan wants to draw a tetrahedron, a special polyhedron.*

Inclusion

- Many different combinations possible for the anchor and the apposition
- Generally speaking the apposition is as or more specific than the anchor
- Non-specific and non-specific must go together

Apposition classes and copular clauses

- Heringa
apposition
- Two types of copular clauses
 - Predicational: The best student is a nice guy.
 - Equative: The best student is Paul
- Correspond to two types of appositions
 - Predicational = Attributive: *Christine, a genius, applied for a patent on several of her inventions. (p. 89)*
 - Equative = Identificational: The police think that *the man in this picture, John Dillinger, robbed a bank. (p. 89)*

Non-nominal appositions

- Only the anchor fits on the specificity scale
- Option is to look at stage-level vs. individual-level predicates
 - Individual-level predicates could be considered generic (e.g. Chierchia 1995)
 - Stage-level predicates are associated with non-generics
- Question: How do different types of anchors interact with different types of predicates and how can this be related back to Heringa's classes (if at all)?

Generic anchor /s-level apposition

- Generic definite class: incompatible
 - **The dog, happy to have a meaty bone/on John's lap, is the most popular housepet in America.*
- Generic indefinite: incompatible
 - **A dog, happy to have a meaty bone/on John's lap, may bite when provoked.*
- Generic definite individual concept: incompatible
 - **The dog of the year, happy to have a meaty bone/on John's lap, is chosen from a pool of nominees.*

Generic anchor/i-level apposition

- Generic definite class: okay
 - Scientists have relied on a few descriptions, preserved skins and the odd bone to describe *the dodo*, extinct for more than 300 years. (*New York Times* online, 4/7/06)
 - *The dog*, from the family Canidae, is known as man's best friend.
- Generic indefinite: okay
 - *Cockfighting*, illegal in the United States, involves specially bred roosters being put into a ring and urged to fight until one is crippled or killed. (*The Times* online, 8/2/11)
 - *A Hawaiian*, from the Hawaiian Islands, typically likes hot weather.
- Generic definite individual concept: okay
 - *The designer of the year*, generally passionate about fashion, is chosen by a set of industry insiders.
 - *The designer of the year*, generally from one of the big houses, is chosen by a set of industry insiders.

Non-specific anchor

- S-level apposition: okay
 - AP: A *puppy*, hungry for love, chased the children down the street.
 - PP: A *puppy*, in ecstasy over his new toy, chased the children down the street.

- I-level apposition: okay
 - AP: A *puppy*, loyal and true, chased the children down the street.
 - PP: A *puppy*, with white socks, chased the children down the street.

Specific anchor/s-level apposition

- Specific indefinite anchor: okay
 - AP: ...*a 69-year-old man*, upset over a land dispute, started a fire that destroyed a 14th-century gate in Seoul... (*The Times* online, 20/10/08)
 - PP: I turned around and saw *a young man*: slim, in a white robe with a white embroidered hat. (*The Guardian*, 28/5/11)

- Specific definite anchor: okay
 - AP: *Her socially ambitious mother*, not content to see her daughter's conquests restricted to one side of the Atlantic, sends her to England. (*The Times* online, 30/10/11)
 - PP: *His wife*, still in Panama, was tracked down by a journalist... (*The Guardian* online, 9/3/11)

- Specific proper noun: okay
 - AP: *Second Life*, upset over the commercialisation of the online world, has established a virtual faction of terrorists. (*The Times* online, 20/20/11)
 - PP: Allen, who had moved to Massachussetts, and *Gates*, then at Harvard, set to work. (*The Times* online, 8/5/11)

Specific anchor and i-level apposition

➤ Specific indefinite anchor:

- AP: What has been visible since then is *a more familiar Mladic, arrogant and demanding*... (*The Guardian* online, 28/5/11)
- PP: *At a checkpoint two miles outside, on the other road into the village, only police cars were allowed to pass.* (*The Guardian* online, 23/5/11)

➤ Specific definite:

- AP: *The Iberworld aircraft, smaller than the A330, had just left Las Palmas to fly Norwegian tourists to Oslo...* (*The Times* online, 10/6/09)
- PP: *The shooting, in a quiet farming village surrounded by vineyards and pomegranate orchards, happened on October 16, 2009.* (*The Times* online, 10/3/11)

➤ Specific proper noun:

- AP: *Mrs. Grant, innocent of his activities, politely asked the policeman to call back later.* (*The Times* online, 19/6/04)
- PP: *...Britain would expand its presence in the rebel stronghold of Benghazi, in the east of Libya...* (*The Times* online, 12/5/11)

Overview of results

	S-level AP	S-level PP	I-level AP	I-level PP
Gen. def. class	*	*	✓	✓
Gen. indef.	*	*	✓	✓
Gen. def. ind. concept	*	*	✓	✓
Non-specific	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spec. indef.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spec. def.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spec. prop. N	✓	✓	✓	✓

Observations

- Non-nominal appositions ≠ identification appositions
 - Non-specific and specific anchor can combine with I-level predicates, which are inherently generic
- Non-nominal appositions ≠ attribution appositions
 - The apposition is not always I-level/generic
- Non-nominal appositions ≠ inclusion appositions
 - The apposition can be generic/I-level even when the anchor is specific

Remarks

- Confirms the idea that apposition is a predication:
anchor BE appositive
 - Combinations of anchor and predicate type are consistent with copular clauses
 - *The dog is happy to have a fresh bone. (generic NP)
- Non-nominal appositions with nominal anchors instantiate different discourse relations with their anchor than those observed for nominal appositives

Consequences for syntax

- Frequency adverbs should not be possible with i-level appositions and specific anchors (Kratzer 1980)
 - *John, often tall, is generally late for school.
 - John, often drunk, is generally late for school.

- Circumstantial adverbials unavailable for i-level appositions (e.g. Chierchia 1995)
 - *John, tall yesterday, was late for school.
 - John, drunk yesterday but sober today, was late for school.

Conclusion

- Unsurprisingly, non-nominal appositions have different properties from nominal appositions
- Seems to confirm the observation that an apposition is a BE-predication
 - Problem: A teacher, Mr Smith, called for reforms.
 - *A teacher is Mr Smith.
- More work to be done on the properties of different types of appositions